

Donald Louis Connors, 79



Donald (Don) Louis Connors, an attorney and 46-year resident of Duxbury, died at home on November 19 surrounded by his loved ones. The cause of death was prostate cancer. He joins his adored wife of 57 years, Peggy, who predeceased him in May 2014.

A lover of natural beauty and open spaces, Don co-founded Duxbury Friends of Conservation in 1970, working closely with the Conservation Commission and town officials to protect such undeveloped gems as Bay Farm and the Duxbury Town Forest. He was instrumental in shaping regional land-use planning in coastal Massachusetts as general counsel to the Martha's Vineyard Commission, the inspiration for the Nantucket Islands Land Bank and as the principal author of legislation creating the Cape Cod Commission.

Donald Louis Connors was born on March 25, 1936 in Boston, the middle child of Edward Joseph and Rosella (Adams) Connors. He grew up in Milton, where he attended the public schools. He spent many hours working at Mr. Tufts' chicken farm, including delivering eggs on Tuesday afternoons to Milton homes. This was how at age 16 he met a pretty girl named Peggy Sheffield. And so began their life-long romance.

Don graduated with a B.S. (cum laude) from Boston College, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army, and was married to Margaret (Peggy) Sheffield in June 1957. Posted at Fort Knox, Kentucky and Fort Hood, Texas, he trained as a tank commander, inspired by boyhood memories of his cousin Jackie's wartime accounts of the Battle of the Bulge. He served in West Germany from 1959 to 1962 in the Second and Third Armored Divisions. In October 1960, when Nikita Khrushchev banged his shoe at a plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Don commanded a tank unit defending the Fulda Gap against a feared Soviet tank advance. He often told of reading Russian novels in his tank during those days when he thought "the world might end." He was honorably discharged from active service in 1962 with the rank of Captain. Returning to the Boston area, he was a Detachment Commander in the Army Reserves. An opponent of the war in Vietnam, he resigned from the Reserves in 1966.

The mid-1960s were busy years for Don and Peggy. While rearing four young children and living in South Weymouth, Don worked as a lobbyist for the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, attended Suffolk University Law School at night, and trained with the Reserves on weekends and summers. Family vacations, usually camping trips in the White Mountains, were happy times. Don graduated with a J.D. from Suffolk University Law School in 1967. He was public affairs counsel for the New England Telephone Company from 1968 to 1971.

The family's 1969 move to Duxbury signaled Don's entry into the field of municipal, environmental and land use law, as a partner in the Boston law firms Tyler & Reynolds, from 1971 to 1981 and Choate, Hall & Stewart, from 1981 to 1993. He was of counsel to Foley, Hoag & Eliot from 1993 to 1995 while chair of the Environmental Business Council, of which he was a founding director, and was principal and president of Connors & Bliss from 1995 to 2007. Don

served on numerous boards, commissions and advisory councils, including the Conservation Law Foundation of New England, New England Aquarium, The Trustees of Reservations, WGBH Educational Foundation Community Advisory Board, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sea Grant College Program, Marine Advisory Group, Environmental League of Massachusetts and Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts). He was a frequent academic and professional lecturer, and authored numerous books, articles and monographs.

In later life, Don was most proud of having made it possible for Peggy to complete her education at Simmons College in the mid-1970s and, later, at the Radcliffe Institute's Landscape Design Program, in return for helping him launch his career. Their complementary professional interests gave them great pleasure in traveling the world. In retirement he took over food shopping and cooking, to Peggy's delight. Caring for her through cancer was deeply meaningful for him.

Don is survived by daughter Joan (and Mary Thompson, Lily Yunxing and Ai Mei Rose Thompson) of Geneva, Switzerland; son Brian (and Ann Michelle, Maria, Nicholas and Caroline) of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; son Thomas of Brookline; daughter-in-law Beth Weinberg (Alyssa Connors and Julie Weinberg-Connors) of Jamaica Plain; son Christopher (Liz and Angela of Duxbury and Tisbury, and Catherine Aiello of Cambridge); siblings Robert Connors and Marcia Carmen; numerous nieces and nephews; and many friends.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday, December 27, at First Parish Church, 842 Tremont Street, Duxbury, at 1 p.m. Contributions can be made in Don's memory to Cranberry Hospice and The Trustees of Reservations.